

**Subject:** Alaska highway funds  
**From:** Jim Steffen <norcoast@ptialaska.net>  
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**To:** DOT\_STIP@dot.state.ak.us

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I feel a strong desire to communicate my opinion on the future use of Federal Highway dollars.

I was gratified to see that the earmarks for the Alaska "bridges to nowhere" were removed. Those appropriations represent the very worst of porkbarrel spending.

There are communities in Southeast that can use highway funds to repair their existing roads, and to construct roads that will directly aid them in their economic development.

Sitka, my home town, needs funding to improve the Sawmill Creek road and associated water and sewer infrastructure. Funds were cut by the state from the 2006-2008 STIP in order to fund the bridges. This is poor policy, and highway dollars must be more evenly distributed than this. In Sitka we have an affordable housing crisis, due largely to the lack of buildable land. We would like to see highway funds invested in such a way as to help us gain access to much needed land for residential development.

The economic merits for the bridges have not been demonstrated to a reasonable degree...possibly because they cannot be demonstrated at all. Please do not take funds from communities such as Sitka in order to build infrastructure that has negligible demonstrable economic benefit and will only require huge outlays of maintenance funding in the future. Give Sitka back its funding for the Sawmill Creek road project and make funds available for other worthy road projects around the state of Alaska that will have a more direct benefit to our citizens.

Respectfully Submitted,

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